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Summary of Record of the Conference of US
Chiefs of Mission in the NEA Area held at
Istanbul; May-11-14, 1954

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NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐

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Participants: Assistant Secretary Byroade; Ambassadors Berry (Iraq), Cannon (Greece), Hare (Lebanon), Henderson (Iran), Hildreth (Pakistan), Mallory (Jordan), Moose (Syria), Wadsworth (Saudi Arabia), Ward (Afghanistan), and Warren (Turkey); Minister Villard (Libya); Chargé Russell (Tel Aviv); Counselor Jones (Cairo); Messrs. Wilson (London), Burdett (State) and Bergus (State).

1. The chiefs of mission first reviewed briefly the current situation in the countries to which each was accredited, and heard a discussion of British policy in the area.

2. The conference then took up the problem of regional security in the Middle East. It concluded that:

a. A "Northern Tier" defense arrangement--specifically Pakistan, Iran, Iraq and Turkey--would materially strengthen the stability and security of this area.

b. It would be a mistake to press Iraq to enter regional security arrangements at this time, although the grant of military assistance will tend to encourage it to do so.

c. The US should also grant military assistance to Iran, including carefully selected material, training and advice.

d. The US should make special efforts to associate Afghanistan with the "Northern Tier," since that country's isolated position might make it more susceptible to Soviet influence.

e. Requests from Arab states lying behind the "Northern Tier" to participate in regional security arrangements should be carefully examined, but neither encouraged nor discouraged at this time.

f. Military aid should be extended at a later date to Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, depending on their willingness and ability to contribute to regional defense.

g. Negotiations should be continued with Saudi Arabia in order to strengthen present defense arrangements.

State Department review completed

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h. Egypt should be assured that the "Northern Tier" concept does not reduce its importance.

i. British support is essential to the "Northern Tier" concept.

j. Military grant aid should not be extended to Israel, but appropriate steps should be taken to allay Israeli fears and reduce the danger that the Arabs might use American arms to attack Israel. These steps should include a public declaration by the US, UK and France that they would impose specified economic and military sanctions to prevent either side from attacking the other.

3. Arab-Israeli tensions were next discussed. The conference noted that while the US is holding its own against Soviet activity, except in Jordan and Syria, this situation could be changed radically were the USSR to profit from Arab-Israeli tensions. An early peace is not foreseen. To reduce this danger the conference recommended that, in addition to strengthening machinery for enforcing the armistice agreements, the US, UK and possibly France should develop plans for economic and military sanctions against the aggressor state.

4. The conference considered in detail the problem of defending the Middle East against Soviet aggression, and in some instances its opinion diverged from the conclusions embodied in the OIR contribution to NIE 30-54 of 3 May 1954. Expansion of the Turkish-Pakistani pact is believed to offer a feasible method of setting up a regional defense organization. Although progress might be slow, none of the obstacles now discernable by their nature preclude achievement of the project.

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